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THE SHORTLIST

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of how insanely icy it
was last weekend
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NEIL D. MARRIOTT

THE STAT SHEET

357

Car crashes in MN between
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state became a skating rink

11th

Drunken driving charge facing
Wisconsin's Bruce Henningfield
after a December 25 crash

250+

"Complete count communities"
in the state working to include
everyone in the 2020 census

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Cost of bus rides to court and county
services available in a six-month
Dakota County pilot program

**"Guy probably never finds
gift shop key chains with
his name on them."**

Reader Dylan Lewis responds to "Man
named 'pooG DaBleed DevilDrugChrist-
Lord' arrested in St. Cloud hit and run" at
citypages.com.

3.2 HULLABALLOO

MINNESOTA IS OFFICIALLY the last state
left with 3.2 beer. That's annoying for craft
beer drinkers and—according to legislators
like State Sen. Karin Housley (R-St. Mary's
Point)—leading to losses for grocery stores.
"Forty-five other states allow for strong beer
in grocery stores," she tells MPR, which is
why she's working on legislation to make
Minnesota one of them. "It's time to update
our Prohibition-era laws to reflect 2019." As
for whether that update will happen in 2020,
well... Rep. Laurie Halverson (DFL-Eagan),
chair of the House commerce committee,
said that though she's likely to take up a
liquor policy bill next year, it'll probably
address things like distillery regulations and
growler sales.

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Columnist leaves Mpls.
St. Paul Magazine over issue
featuring **GARRISON KEILLOR**

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Twin Cities were in **DIFFERENT
TIME ZONES** for two weeks?

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we had to prove were dumb and
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in St. Cloud hit and run

Minnesota **MOM'S PETITION**
against Target plastic bags gets
450,000 signatures

BE GONE

Columnist Nora McNerny leaves Mpls.St.Paul Magazine over issue featuring Garrison Keillor

You might know Nora McNerny of Minneapolis for her books; her extremely popular podcast, *Terrible, Thanks for Asking*; or for her nonprofit, Still Kickin, which provides financial support for “awesome people going through awful things.”

But one place you won’t see her byline anymore is Mpls.St.Paul Magazine, where she was, until very recently, a columnist.

On December 23, McNerny took to Twitter to announce she’d no longer be working with the Twin Cities lifestyle magazine. The reason, she said, was its January 2020 cover story: a feature called “Hindsight 20/20,” centering on former *A Prairie Home Companion* host Garrison Keillor.

Minnesota Public Radio cut ties with Keillor after he was accused of “inappropriate behavior” with a colleague. He claimed he’d only put a hand on her back to console

her and apologized after she “recoiled.” An investigation by MPR, however, uncovered a “years-long pattern” of allegations against Keillor—women being paid for their silence, becoming the subjects of ribald, uncharming limericks, and enduring “habitual” bullying and humiliation.

Now, like many of the men brought down temporarily by the #MeToo movement, Keillor has begun to creep back into the spotlight. McNerny called his reappearance on the cover of Mpls.St.Paul Magazine—glancing soulfully downward and removing his glasses, as if in a moment of weary honesty with the viewer—a “privilege afforded to a certain kind of man.”

“And when we prioritize the documentation of a powerful man because of his art or his culture impact or or or—we tell survivors everywhere a powerful message,” she wrote. “We confirm that HE is more interesting, more worth documenting and



COURTESY OF STILL KICKIN

analyzing, than the impact of his actions.”

In her Twitter thread, McNerny said she was given “24 hours” to contribute her “point of view” on the story in a sort of “roundup” addendum—all without being given access to the piece itself. She said she encouraged editorial staff to “think of the impact” focusing on Keillor would have on survivors of harassment and assault.

“I’m so sorry my words did nothing,” she said.

As McNerny pointed out, it’s not always possible for women to leave a job where

they feel harassed or unfairly treated. With a platform and financial security like hers, she can, so she is. There are, she said, other places she can write.

McNerny wasn’t available for comment, but Jayne Haugen Olson, the magazine’s editor in chief, says the commentary hasn’t changed the magazine’s feelings on deciding to run Keillor on the cover.

“Nora resigned on a call with me and our executive editor on November 26 after we contacted her alerting her to Keillor being in the issue,” Olson said via email. She said after the call, they followed up with an email letting her know they’d “heard her” and thought the readers would also benefit from hearing from her, and asked if she’d like to file a new column for January with a “three-day deadline.”

McNerny declined.

Olson said ultimately “subscribers and newsstand buyers” will decide if the piece is “compelling or relevant,” and that “change comes from understanding topics from many perspectives so we can learn.”

McNerny isn’t convinced Keillor has earned her forgiveness—or anyone else’s.

“Redemption includes contrition and action,” she wrote. “Happy Holidays!”

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Best Egg Rolls In Town

Columbia Heights wants to build the first city hall in a luxury apartment building

By **SUSAN DU**

At the end of September, in a meagerly attended City Council meeting, the blue-collar suburb of Columbia Heights decided to build a new city hall in the doorway of a luxury apartment building.

Such a marriage had never been attempted before, as far as city staff could tell, anywhere else in America.

Mixed-use properties—shiny flats with rooftop pools balanced atop breweries and boutiques—are the Twin Cities' current development obsession. Members of Minnesota's congressional delegation rent local constituent offices in private office buildings. But for a city to buy a 20,000-square-foot condo, almost the entire ground floor of a high-end apartment building, and call it the official seat of government? Columbia Heights would be the first.

Luxury housing developer Alatus, which recently canceled long-suffering plans to build a 40-story condo in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, would be responsible for the new six-story building at 40th and Central, where an obsolete business center, the former home of Northeast Bank, now stands.

If Columbia Heights ever wanted to create a destination downtown, with places to dine, shop, and enjoy nightlife, this prime parcel would be its nexus.

Its high potential for commercial development was what qualified it for lucrative federal tax breaks handed out by the Republican Congress of 2017.

In addition, Alatus requested financial aid from Columbia Heights—up to \$43 million worth of subsidies that would otherwise go to schools and roads. The city taking it upon itself to purchase space would further insure Alatus' success.

Council members spoke of the proposition as if it were too good to refuse.

They reasoned that purchasing a piece of someone else's development would be a cheaper way to get a new city hall than constructing fresh. The city and the building could share maintenance costs and parking. When the roof needed replacing, they'd split that burden too.

Unanimously, they voted to both subsidize Alatus and buy into its building.

Their decision came just three business days after the city hosted its first and only public engagement meeting introducing the concept.

The most heated critique of the vote and its undebated, long-term costs came from resident Sean Broom.

Almost UPSCALE



ZOE PRINDS-FLASH

A progressive who ran unsuccessfully for the council in 2016, Broom was visibly red in the face as he delivered a fuming denunciation of the choice of a city hall that was cheaper “only in the most facile and short-sighted sense of the term,” made with “barely a sneeze of community involvement.”

“You guys are shoveling money into Alatus’ pockets,” Broom said. “At the end of the year, when a bunch of developers get together and have drinks for whoever got the best deal, Bob Lux is getting drinks bought for him because he just got a great deal from the city of Columbia Heights.”

II. Holding out for a hero

North of northeast Minneapolis, the hustle of Central Avenue slows to a provincial pace as it wends through a smattering of auto shops, small restaurants, and neighborhoods composed of aging houses built after World War II.

At 40th and Central Avenue Northeast is the library, which was recently renovated after 15 years of decay, and only following a divisive referendum in which some residents felt its upkeep was less important than a tax increase of \$40 a year.

A few blocks down, there’s a conspicuous cavity where Rainbow Foods used to be. Its closure five years ago left the city without a full-service grocery store. Hy-Vee once flirted with taking its place, but allowed its application to lapse while focusing on openings elsewhere in the metro.

Nearly one-fourth of Columbia Heights residents live in poverty—the highest rate in Anoka County. Young professionals, those most likely to pay a premium to live in apartments with hot tubs and spin rooms, aren’t flooding to the Heights. Where the population has grown, it’s done so among immigrant families seeking affordable housing.

Columbia Heights’ 2040 comprehensive plan urged the city to understand the needs of its lower-income residents, and prescribed building 133 affordable housing units over the next decade.

But shifting demographics have brought occasional cultural collisions.

In 2015, school board member Grant Nichols resigned after comments accusing Muslims of unsanitary bathroom habits surfaced on his Facebook.

And when the affordable housing developer Dominion attempted to build apartments on an old Kmart site, the prospect of new renters earning 60 percent of area median income caused an incendiary row at city hall in which some members of a local condo association, demanding the city spurn rentals, conflated density with transients sowing “disarray and neglect,” “noise and traffic,” and “gun wars.”



ZOE PRINDS-FLASH

Columbia Heights has been trying to forge a path into the future for a long time. Replacing its city hall—a 60-year-old patchwork of quick fixes with water seeping in through the walls—is part of a long-range plan to redeem its reputation of neglect and blight.

Then came President Donald Trump to the rescue.

III. Cutting-edge tax breaks

In 2017, Congress passed Trump’s tax bill, a transformative package of sweeping cuts, which, in the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office’s conservative estimation, would add \$2.3 trillion to the national debt over 10 years.

One provision of that bill established “opportunity zones” in the poorest census tracts across America. The governors of each state got to choose them, so in Minnesota, counties nominated places that were supposed to be both low-income and ripe for development. Real estate investors who built there could avoid paying capital gains taxes as long as they held on to their buildings for 10 years.

These domestic tax shelters were designed to funnel private capital held by the richest Americans into the nation’s most impoverished communities. A win-win, in theory.

In practice, economists soon found, opportunity zones had only minimal incentive to accomplish a public service.

They were created in an industrial center in Nevada that housed a Tesla factory, a prison in Florida, and at the Philadelphia Zoo, according to a 2018 study by Brookings Institution economist Adam Looney. These locations only loosely fit the definition of “low-income” because they weren’t places where people actually lived.

Unlike other placemaking programs intended to uplift the least fortunate, like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit for affordable housing, developers could build almost anything in an opportunity zone. As a result, lavish condos and high-end hotels are cropping up in neighborhoods whose longtime residents are now at risk of displacement despite their plight being the basis for the program’s existence.

“There was an impression that the process was opaque, was influenced by local developers rather than being based on the needs of low-income residents,” says Looney. “The whole thing is an amazing piece of work, to get the law passed. It’s a boondoggle.”

Columbia Heights’ downtown commercial corridor was designated an opportunity zone in the spring of 2018. Aaron Chirpich, the city’s community development director, promptly held a developer roundtable to advertise the former business center at 40th and Central, which had been vacant

Columbia Heights’ main drag is a procession of strip malls and auto shops.

for three years, crumbling and occasionally burglarized.

A few developers were interested. Alatus rose to the top of the heap with a flashy vision of first-class, amenity-rich apartments to lure downsizing seniors and young professionals priced out of northeast Minneapolis. It proposed a product nearly identical to the Ironwood Apartments, a “luxury community” Alatus built in New Hope when Chirpich was the community development director there.

Later, when Alatus learned of Columbia Heights’ desire for a new city hall, it drew up plans incorporating council chambers and staff offices, suggesting the city buy space onsite.

Staff came to believe that city hall made sense as an anchor tenant.

“We bring activity to that corner, and we have a stable presence,” Chirpich says. “So if there’s going to be some commercial or retail on the first floor, in their estimation, why not have a very solid partner in somebody that can stay there for 50 years, instead of a revolving door of marginalized retail enterprises?”

But Alatus drove a harder bargain still. Simply building luxury apartments in an opportunity zone wasn’t profitable enough. Alatus could demand higher rents in downtown Minneapolis, says Chirpich, so it would have to have financial aid in

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the form of tax increment financing (TIF) to build in Columbia Heights.

TIF, simply put, would freeze property taxes on the business center site. Additional taxes generated as a result of development would be set aside and reinvested in the apartment building and immediate surroundings. Normally, those taxes would feed the city's general needs, county roads, and the local school district, but by forgoing its future income, Columbia Heights could subsidize Alatus even though it didn't have the ability to do so upfront.

According to a TIF plan representing the maximum potential of the project, Columbia Heights would give up to \$43 million over the course of 26 years to reimburse Alatus for the cost of land, site improvements, utilities, and a raft of other development expenses. The loss to Anoka County and local schools would be \$1.6 million each.

Residential developments are the least sensible use of TIF schemes, according to University of Illinois-Chicago Prof. David Merriman, whose research has called for more careful use of this common public financing tool.

More housing means more families, and educating those children increases the burden on local schools—which would, by design, lose property tax revenue as a result of TIF.

Bankrolling luxury housing, which creates almost no jobs, is particularly hard to justify, Merriman says.

"Big cities will have a better chance of negotiating with a developer to get a better deal because they do it all the time, whereas they have more time and more sophistication," he says. "Small cities, it's very easy for the developer to have their way."

Columbia Heights staff believe giving Alatus tens of millions in financial aid is justified. In their opinion, the business center building couldn't develop without it, the market value of the property would never increase, and none of the foregone tax revenues would exist but for Alatus.

Slow-paced and neighborly, Columbia Heights is seeing its population grow among immigrant families seeking affordable housing.

The TIF probably won't be \$43 million when in its final form. Costs could go down depending on the ultimate number of apartments and size of a small coffee shop planned for the ground floor. But in any case, the city plans to use TIF to reimburse Alatus for all eligible expenses under state law, says city manager Kelli Bourgeois.

Which includes land. This means that although Columbia Heights bought the business center building in July for \$2.9 million with the intention of selling it to Alatus, the developer will ultimately reimburse itself with taxes that would otherwise go to the city.

"This is exactly how TIF works," insists Chirpich.

Cities are not obligated to reimburse developers for all related costs, and are free to negotiate the breakdown of financial aid versus how much the developer must contribute, according to Jason Nord, an assistant state auditor who specializes in TIF.

The finding that development wouldn't occur without TIF is also highly subjective, he says.

"Maybe a development that big wouldn't have happened, but a smaller development would have. Or maybe the development wouldn't have happened in the very near term, but one might have come down eventually."

IV. Pitching the people

On September 18, the city held its only public engagement meeting about Alatus' city hall proposal. About 15 people attended.

Chirpich, the economic development director, put a small chart on a large easel



AARON LAVINSKY/STAR TRIBUNE

comparing the costs associated with buying a condo versus building a standalone city hall. Sure enough, it looked as though taxpayers would save \$5.5 million by going with Alatus.

Part of the savings required the city to give Alatus the municipal parking ramp next door to the business center building, which served area businesses, a local church with an aging population, and other residents in the winter months when overnight street parking was not allowed. In return, Alatus would credit Columbia Heights \$2 million, which would be spent building a portion of the city's condo.

The cost of the TIF didn't come up for discussion. Neither did yearly condo dues.

Emails obtained from a data practices request show Alatus wants Columbia Heights to pay \$20,000 for common area maintenance and \$15,000 for 30 parking stalls annually. The total would be four times the city's revenues from adding its parking ramp back to the tax rolls, and doesn't include utilities, cleaning services, or a reserve fund for major repairs.

At the end of the night, Chirpich announced he would ask the City Council to make a "significant decision" at its full meeting on September 23.

That decision turned out to be the creation of the TIF district and a commitment to buy into Alatus' project.

Connie Buesgens, an affordable housing proponent, was the only council member to express concern. Placing city hall—a fundamentally dull bureaucracy shop closed nights and weekends—on Columbia Heights' main drag might be a lost opportunity to pump life into an otherwise fully built city, she pointed out.

And what happens when a contentious issue appears on the council's agenda and irate residents crowd the chambers and the hallway, making noise, per their constitutional right? How would the city contain a protest with 500 roommates living on the floors above?

The Heights Theater marks an underdeveloped downtown intersection.

Buesgens' colleagues were far more enthusiastic.

John Murzyn Jr., son of a longtime park superintendent after whom the community center Murzyn Hall was named, said he would support any option that could avoid raising taxes on Columbia Heights residents.

Bobby Williams, co-owner of Bobby and Steve's Auto World, added, "As a matter of fact, the developer told me personally—we haven't seen the numbers yet—but it looks like city hall may not cost us anything. That's what he told me."

City staff stepped in to inform Williams that, regardless of what Alatus might have said, building out the new condo would still cost Columbia Heights an estimated \$2.7 million.

Nevertheless, Columbia Heights Mayor Donna Schmitt, who once announced on Twitter that "gentrification is a myth," urged fellow council members to be brave and lead other cities by example.

"Everyone will be looking to us," she reasoned. "It's also creating a unique and marketable identity for our city. It has been mentioned, this has not happened before."

Ultimately the council voted unanimously to approve financial aid for the Alatus project and become its first resident.

Some residents were taken aback, unaware that this city hall concept had been under consideration.

Amada Simula, president of the community building nonprofit HeightsNEXT, wishes the city had tried as hard to involve the public in the creation of city hall as it had for Columbia Heights' 100th anniversary bash, coming up in 2021, and for which the staff have been gathering feedback for months.

Mary Tholkes, a Columbia Heights resident of 40 years, says that while the

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How CBD can help you through the holidays

The Christmas and Chanukah seasons are upon us, and as the year brings families and loved ones closer to one another, it also brings them closer to stress and anxiety. The end of the year is hard on people. Money problems, cross-country travel and personal issues with family can sometimes bring stress and worry to people and signs of anxiety like suicide rates tend to be higher around the holidays.

Amid these worrying aspects of a traditionally cheery time of year, there's no wonder why people might seek out-of-the-box solutions, but there are also less weighty concerns: What to think up for that hard-to-buy-for family member, for instance.

One avenue thousands will be taking this year is the newly-minted market for CBD products, fresh from a yearlong innovation streak after the substance was federally legalized with 2018's Farm Bill.

Scientific conclusions are far from evident, but early studies have shown connections between CBD and the body's endocannabinoid system, or ECS, to regulate bodily functions. There's even a prescription epilepsy drug based on CBD.

Meanwhile, ordinary people have found many uses for CBD oils, flower and other products. Testimonials show they love CBD for their anxiety, insomnia, chronic pain problems, inflammation and other common issues.

What any newcomer to the CBD market, especially this time of year, will notice is that it can be hard to tell quality CBD products from junk. With the surge in the market there are so many newcomers and gas-station cannabis experts that you'd almost think trust is a four-letter word.

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Because of how variable hemp products and their manufacture can be, the Nothing But Hemp team keeps keep monitoring on all the brands and product lines it keeps on its shelves, hand-selecting the best in the industry and dropping products that don't keep up with their standards.

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Free to sign up!

council has been discussing various ideas for a new city hall for a long time, the public had almost no time to understand the cohabitation situation, which seemed both nontraditional and impromptu.

For instance, condos are governed by a ream of contracts, but no one's seen a hint of a draft discussing conditions on the city's authority over its unit. Who decides when major repairs occur? How much would the city be on the hook for?

"The condo thing, it's all rather nebulous at this point in time. What does that really mean?"

V. Winners and losers

Searching far and wide, Columbia Heights staff recently located another city developing an uncannily similar city hall concept: Oakland Park, Florida, a suburb of Ft. Lauderdale.

Its city manager, David Hebert, happens to be a sunbird who graduated from Farmington High and knows the Twin Cities well.

Oakland Park he compared candidly to West St. Paul: "older, settled, warehouse-y, not-the-belle-of-the-ball, the has-been, also-ran." There are no fancy homes or shopping centers aside from strip malls.

People only know it because they pass it on the way to the beach.

But as Ft. Lauderdale boomed, Hebert started to amass a list of goals for his forgotten city, including more housing, parking, retail, and entertainment. Hurricanes kept battering city hall, so he needed a new one of those too.

Incentives and subsidies are big down in Florida, Hebert says. But Oakland Park was too poor to titillate a developer with

"Everyone will be looking to us. It's also creating a unique and marketable identity for our city."

monetary offers. What the city did have were two acres of land, vacant for more than 15 years and polluted by an extinct autobody shop, where no one wanted to build.

So Oakland Park applied for and received opportunity zone designation. Then it named its parcel a brownfield so that cleaning it would yield tax credits that could be sold on the open market to recoup costs. Grants from various state agencies upgraded tangential roadways.

Oakland Park eventually found a devel-

oper to build two buildings in an area that hasn't seen new construction in 40 years. They will be workforce housing for a working-class city, plus a combination of shops and restaurants. Across the street stands the landmark brewery Funky Buddha. To the north, one of the city's premier parks.

"It's going to be like St. Anthony Main," Hebert says. "Small, quaint, bucolic."

Finally, in order to sweeten the deal,

consulting residents and area businesses for a year and a half.

In Columbia Heights, a public engagement period of less than a week resulted in a very different deal. Alatus hasn't yet purchased the business center parcel from Columbia Heights. The city hasn't produced architectural plans for its city hall condo. The cost of the TIF will change as the rest of the project unfolds. Though many details remain unknown, Columbia Heights has officially committed to the global decision of moving in with Alatus.

When Chirpich talks about Columbia Heights seizing the opportunity to work with Alatus, the city official invokes faith. "The mantra of this development team has always been: We'll take it as far as we can with the best information available to make each incremental decision. And at some point, you do have to step off and believe that you've got enough information to make a good decision," he says.

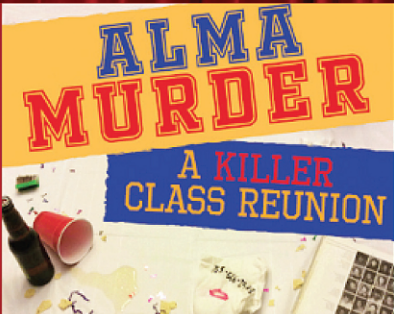
Chirpich calls city hall's placement "bold" and "cutting edge." A futuristic model for other financially strapped towns in the years to come.

"We feel we've done the best that we can given the constraints that we're under," he says. "Because the broader development project is being driven by a bigger picture." ☐

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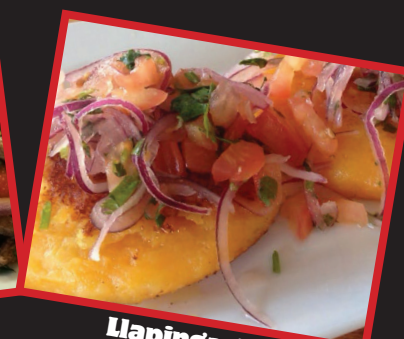
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BY SARAH BRUMBLE

Congratulations, everyone! Somehow we just cruised around the Milky Way in our dizzy little spa bubble for another 365 days, so I guess that means I'll be making sense of what happened in food and dining during that time....

You'll notice some of these themes aren't so different from last year. Life here in Minnesota changes in degrees and seasons. We drift, like snow, planning for spring and its eternal promise—from patios and new restaurants to farmers markets and bountiful produce. Still, let's raise a glass to all that's happened, and more that's yet to come.

Deep Thinking About Food and Its Consequences

We all know there's no such thing as ethical consumption under capitalism, but 2019 reminded us there's still value in trying. AllSquare, with its mission to employ formerly incarcerated individuals, made Time's list of the 100 most important places in the world. Just/us closed shop in solidarity with fellow tenants who couldn't manage an astronomical rent hike, only to find a more, erm, *just* setting to reopen this month. Uptown's Provision is creating an entirely new model for accessible and equitable dining, and an ever growing roster of restaurants are providing benefits for their staff (often via a service charge on customers' tabs).

Speculating on Uptown's Deadness

You may have noticed that asking readers if Uptown is dead constitutes its own trend around here. We understand if you think we're messing with you, but we're asking ourselves this question, too. Consider, for a moment, 2019's casualties, all but one of which occurred in the back half of the year: Uptown Pizza (which might reopen), Famous Dave's, New Bohemia, It's Greek to Me, Libertine, Hasty Tasty, Piggy Bank, and Mercado.

What Is Dead May Never Die

Never has it felt more like defeat wasn't an option for owners. After calling it "quits," restaurants have found ways to rise again in new and surprising forms after admitting their initial idea (or timing) wasn't quite right. Luckily, the Twin Cities has become a place with nooks and crannies where such reinvention is possible. Famous Dave's found a smaller footprint in the same neighborhood to expand their delivery market; golden boy Justin Sutherland breathed new life

WHAT HATH CHEF WROUGHT

A look back at the year in food



Due Focacceria

ALMA GUZMAN

into Ox Cart's severed rooftop space as an arcade playplace; Revolution came back as locally relevant Potluck; Sporty's changed its name and ownership (but little else) to become Como Tap; the masterminds behind Funky Grits discovered a new environment and formula in a community cafe; and Fish Bowl Poke quietly shifted into Graze food hall without changing its wares at all.

Food Halls Are Here to Stay

The food hall boom continued, and our Magic Eight Ball predicts this will remain the case thanks to an (actual) climate that shifts on food trucks and a (fiscal, real estate) climate that makes investing capital in untested chefs a dicey proposition. Rosedale's Revolution Hall only refined the concept as Graze Provisions + Libations made the first of the North Loop's big splashes. Late in the year, the North Loop Galley would seize Graze's energy to elevate the possibilities of food-hall dining in a smaller setting. Over in Northeast, Kieran's Kitchen took the theme in a different direction, where it acts like an Ingredient Hall; artisans from the

Food Building form a restaurant and bar out of the goods made in their roamable workspaces. We're also still waiting for Malcolm Yards Market near Surly.

Culinary Edging

Good things take time. We get it. The hype for big projects like the aforementioned Malcolm Yards continues to build... like it's done since 2017. Similarly, downtown's Dayton's Project (including its own avocado toast-fueled food hall) enters year three of construction, boasting two windows full of snowbears to show for itself. At least Ann Kim's fresh tortilla joint has a name now? Sooki & Mimi is expected to arrive in "spring 2020." Meanwhile, south Minneapolis pizza don GoodTimes reassured onlookers as recently as late November that slow and steady progress was (still) being made after bricks were repeatedly thrown through its windows this spring.

It's the Rococo Era of Drinking

Alcohol is going more niche than ever, which is great for the tongue and hard on

the liver. Betty Danger's has started dressing for Christmas a quarter of the year, and Lawless serves some of the best cocktails in town while also being a sincere (rotating) theme bar. Local distilleries continue to boom (possibly to their detriment) as gems like Dampfwerk and Stilheart expanded into tasting rooms, and Tattersall added the Clover Club and canned cocktails for liquor stores. Meanwhile, the beer scene hasn't yet found that dreaded taproom bubble, and breweries continue to open at a rapid clip. Some, like One Fermentary & Taproom, will try to break the mold, while others stake claims in uncharted lands (cough: Forgotten Star in Fridley, Eden Prairie's Fat Pants). And never forget: This was the year of local hard seltzer.

St. Paul Is a Workhorse

Minneapolis' sleepy sister to the east isn't going to be happy about this, but we know they've got something special going on. From Minneapolis food trucks and mainstays migrating eastward, to new and inventive spots like Magic Noodle, Treats Cereal Bar & Boba, Due Focacceria, Hope Breakfast Bar, Bap and Chicken, and Estelle, there's increasing urgency for Minneapolitans to realize that across 280 awaits a promised land of flavor.

South Minneapolis' Booze Boom

Thanks to the promise of that November 2018 ballot measure, actual! booze! has come to neighborhoods beyond a handful of acres in downtown Minneapolis... and boy are bartenders dusting off their shakers. Neighborhood favorites like Terzo, Bull's Horn, Saint Genevieve, and Pizzeria Lola (to name only a few) immediately secured a license and got to work, pleasing patrons with everything from Aperol to Old Overholt. Not a soul was heard complaining, especially during patio season.

'Burb Your Enthusiasm

The Twin Cities—here meaning Minneapolis and St. Paul proper—can't rely on diners from the 'burbs making pilgrimages into the "scary" Cities like they once could. Quality establishments of their own have blossomed in the past year, making dealing with parking shortages and our concrete snobbery less appealing than ever. Now we're heading their way thanks to Robbinsdale's reborn Pig Ate My Pizza, Rosville's Baldamar, Spring Park's Vann, the mafioso glory of Shakopee's Little Chicago Chophouse, and Cannon Falls' nationally recognized Falls Landing. 

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JAN 10



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A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE &
MUSIC OF JANIS JOPLIN**
WITH MAE SIMPSON BAND
FIRST AVENUE

JAN 11

FIRST AVENUE MAINROOM



**THE CURRENT'S
15TH ANNIVERSARY
PARTY**
FT. BLACK PUMAS, THE BAD MAN,
SERATONES, MaLLy, 26 BATS!

JAN 18



COLD WAR KIDS
WITH OVERCOATS

JAN 24



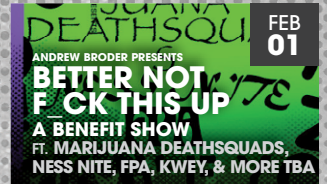
**FIRST AVENUE'S
BEST NEW
BANDS OF 2019**
WITH FruitPunchLoveBoy,
GREEN/BLUE, LOKI'S FOLLY,
MAE SIMPSON, MUUN BATO,
NUR-D, UNDER VIOLET

JAN 25



THRICE
WITH mewithoutYou,
DRUG CHURCH, HOLY FAWN

JAN 30



**BETTER NOT
F*CK THIS UP**
A BENEFIT SHOW
FT. MARIJUANA DEATHSQUADS,
NESS NITE, FPA, KWEY, & MORE TBA

FEB 01



JJ GREY & MOFRO
WITH FREDDY & FRANCINE

FEB 07



RODDY RICCH

FEB 11



THE SUBURBS
WITH MILOE, DJ JAKE RUDH

FEB 14



**ED ACKERSON
CELEBRATION
OF LIFE BENEFIT**
FT. THE JAYHAWKS, KRAIG
JARRETT JOHNSON, MARK
MALLMAN, & MORE

FEB 15



LIL TJAY

FEB 20

PALACE THEATRE



**MANDOLIN
ORANGE**
WITH KATE RHUDY

JAN 30



**MICHAEL
KIWANUKA**

FEB 03



KING PRINCESS

FEB 04



GRACE POTTER
WITH DEVON GILFILLIAN

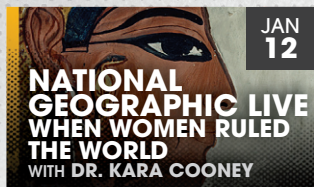
FEB 08



**CALEXICO AND
IRON & WINE**
WITH MADISON CUNNINGHAM

FEB 14

FITZGERALD THEATER



**NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC LIVE
WHEN WOMEN RULED
THE WORLD**
WITH DR. KARA COONEY

JAN 12



MAT KEARNEY
WITH ELI TEPLIN

FEB 04



**LADYSMITH BLACK
MAMBAZO**

MAR 01



**KAMASI
WASHINGTON**

MAR 04



**NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC LIVE
LIFE ON THE VERTICAL**
WITH MARK SYNNOTT

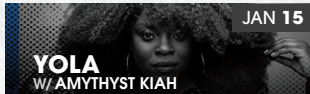
MAR 08

FINE LINE



**HOLD YOUR LADY
TIGHT NIGHT**
W/ HELLO HEARTACHE, COLE DIAMOND

JAN 10



YOLA
W/ AMYTHYST KIAH

JAN 15



**NORTH MISSISSIPPI
ALLSTARS**
W/ SOUTHERN AVENUE

JAN 18



**COYOTE KID
AND LONGFALL
ALBUM RELEASE SHOW**
W/ INLAND COASTAL

JAN 02



NATALIE FIDELER
W/ FLOODWATER ANGEL, NATL PARK
SRVC, GETTING BY

JAN 06



YOUR SMITH
W/ CHELSEA JADE

JAN 21



RON POPE
W/ CAROLINE SPENCE

JAN 22



GZA

JAN 26



**CASTER VOLOR,
REVEREND JACK,
REBEL QUEENS,
AND REVENANT SOUL**

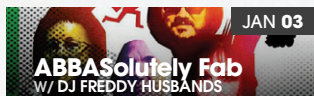
JAN 03



YACHT
W/ JUICEBOXXX

JAN 07

TURF CLUB



ABBASolutely Fab
W/ DJ FREDDY HUSBANDS

JAN 03



RACHAEL KILGOUR
W/ LAURA HUGO

JAN 04



**THE CACTUS
BLOSSOMS**
W/ DUSTY HEART

JAN 06



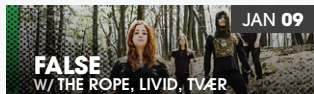
**KRUSH GROOVE
80S HIP HOP THEME SHOW!**
W/ IRM CREW, DELITE & SMOKE DEE,
SET THE SMITH, AND MORE

JAN 04



COLD PEPPERS 2
W/ buxapleny, KANDOR, HARLX,
HeDawn, WILL ROBINSON, & MORE

JAN 08



FALSE
W/ THE ROPE, LIVID, TV&R

JAN 09



**WILLIE WISELY,
TURN! TURN! TURN!,
AND DYLAN HICKS**

JAN 10



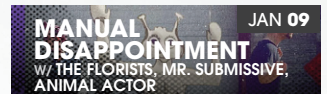
HENHOUSE PROWLERS
W/ FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE,
MAX GRAHAM TRIO

JAN 11



**RADIO K
GIGAWATT RESIDENCY**
W/ ICEBLINK, IE, SISTER SPECIES

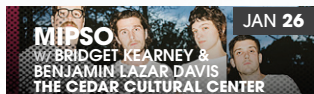
JAN 05



**MANUAL
DISAPPOINTMENT**
W/ THE FLORISTS, MR. SUBMISSIVE,
ANIMAL ACTOR

JAN 09

AROUND TOWN



MIPSO
W/ BRIDGET KEARNEY &
BENJAMIN LAZAR DAVIS
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

JAN 26



POPPY
W/ VOWWS
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

JAN 30



MAGIC CITY HIPPIES
W/ TIM ATLAS
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

FEB 01



THE DOLLOP
W/ DAVE ANTHONY, GARETH REYNOLDS
PANTAGES THEATRE

MAR 07



THEO KATZMAN
W/ REIT MADISON
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

MAR 07

A LIST

SATURDAY "Vision 2020" at Mia features gorgeous, historical, and amazing photography from three African portrait artists **p. 16**

Summer Cypher returns this winter for a series of B-boy/B-girl events.



KIMANI BEARD

WEDNESDAY 1.1

COMEDY

SEAN DONNELLY

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

"I'm newly divorced, which is a bit of a bummer. But I'm doing good," says comedian Sean Donnelly. "I just did a spot on Tracy Morgan's show, *The Last O.G.*, playing a security guard, and I've been doing tons of standup as usual." Onstage, Donnelly is talking about everything from UFOs to social media. "I had ADD as a kid," he says of the latter. "Social media is like my brain, but as a collective unit. After a few days, we can't remember what we were upset about or who we were mad at." Donnelly reckons we're headed back to 1996 as people back away from social media. "I already see it happening. People say, 'I check my email and maybe look up a recipe.' Even the tech companies have caught on, offering

features that let you lock yourself out of the internet for a while." He likens it to how bars were years ago. "They used to say in bars, 'No politics or religion.' I think that's kind of good. I'm not saying we can't talk about things, but we can still be friends and have different opinions. Family members are unfriending each other. People need to chill out. One thing doesn't define a person." 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 7 p.m. Sunday. \$16. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

THURSDAY 1.2

COLD

WINTERTIME SAUNA SESSIONS

TRAILHEAD AT THEODORE WIRTH PARK

We are currently entering the coldest months in Minnesota. Ice scraping is

a daily necessity, ski masks are socially acceptable, and nights drinking alone with Netflix are totally the norm. But that's not all that's happening here in our fair state; people are also ramping up for the Winter Carnival, the Ice Castles, and the U.S. Pond Hockey Tournament. Believe it or not, you can enjoy this weather, too, but it's also important to have a respite. So if you plan to head to Theodore Wirth Park for a little snowshoeing, fat tire bike riding, or cross-country skiing, consider also booking a session with the 612 Sauna Society Collective. One of the few reasons to put on a swimsuit in Minnesota in winter, this service gives you an opportunity to warm up, cool down, and then warm up again in a series of 10- to 20-minute cycles. After a bit, you might actually find yourself craving the cold. Crazy, right? The 612 crew

will be at the park through January 5 (and probably longer; they tend to post their available dates in two-week increments), and the mobile sauna has been known to travel to places like the lakes in south Minneapolis and Surly's brewery. Check 612saunasociety.com to reserve a spot, learn about good sauna etiquette (it's also flu season, everyone), and see where they plan to travel next. 5 to 9 p.m. Thursdays through Fridays; 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturdays through Sundays. \$25 per session. 1221 Theodore Wirth Pkwy., Minneapolis. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

COMEDY

BENGT WASHBURN

ACME COMEDY CO.

"I'm in an airport in Costa Rica," Bengt Washburn says. "I did a cruise ship gig last week and this is where I get off." For years, working the boats, as they say, wasn't the most desirable gig in comedy, but Washburn says times have changed. "I don't mind it," he says. "Older audiences now are pretty hip. When I first started, they didn't know what standup was. Now if you have an audience of 50- and 60-year-olds, they know who Carlin is; they get it." Washburn doesn't work blue, but there are still things that seem otherwise innocuous that he can't joke about on ships. "I still do clubs. That's where I do the writing," he says. His PG/PG-13 style earned him two specials on Dry Bar Comedy, a website and production company that favors clean standup. "My last special for them was called *Not Bad*," he says. "At Acme, I'll be doing the 'Sort of Bad' show. It's all the stuff from *Not Bad*, but not truncated. It goes a little further." For example, he'll be able to touch on some social and political topics that he couldn't do at sea. "That would start a fight on a ship," he adds. "But it would be pretty funny given the age group. Someone would tip over and die." 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday, and Saturday. \$16-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►

FRIDAY 1.3

THEATER

BECKY SHAW

GREMLIN THEATRE

At first glance, contemporary playwright Gina Gionfriddo's dark comedy *Becky Shaw* might appear to be a rollicking farce of an epically awful blind date. From the moment the titular heroine, an aimless college dropout, meets her proposed match, a cynical money manager, the evening is clearly headed for disaster. But those expecting a conventional narrative should prepare themselves for a more twisted tale, one where the barbed humor may hit uncomfortably close to home. While Becky and her suitor are uproariously mismatched, theirs is far from the only dysfunctional relationship on display: Their would-be matchmakers, married friends, are harboring their own barely repressed doubts. The foursome create a hysterical depiction of best intentions gone awry, all the while ruminating on how even the most estranged unions can be endured for the sake of convenience. Along the way, insights hit on how moral honesty can be weighed against more pressing considerations, such as financial security. Featuring a standout cast of Kevin Fanshaw, Jodi Kellogg, Chelsie Newhard, Logan Verdoorn, and Olivia Wilusz, under the adept direction of Ellen Fenster, this new production should prove to be nothing less than the most ridiculously relatable anti-romance of the winter theater season. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays; 3 p.m. Sundays. \$28. 550 Vandalia St., St. Paul; 651-228-7008.

Through January 26 —BRAD RICHASON

FILM

FAYE ON THE RUN

TRYLON CINEMA

As the film industry faces scrutiny over the longstanding dearth of complex roles for women, there's never been a better time to appreciate the standard set by screen legend Faye Dunaway. Refusing to accept stereotypically shallow parts, Dunaway imbued her portrayals with a blend of intellectual depth and emotional nuance. Dunaway's enduring influence has become more evident over the years, as demonstrated by Trylon Cinema's four-film retrospective *Faye on the Run*. *Chinatown* (1974) features one of Dunaway's most searing performances, as Evelyn Mulwray, wife of a prominent city engineer, whose tragic past becomes exposed through the investigative persistence of ace gumshoe J.J. "Jake" Gittes (Jack Nicholson).

Faye Dunaway steals scenes at Trylon.



CHINATOWN

Evoking empathy for a notorious pair of compulsive criminals, *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) pairs Dunaway with Warren Beatty as the two ride-or-die outlaws on a robbery road trip destined to end in bullets and bloodshed. *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) casts Dunaway as an initially reluctant ally to a wanted CIA analyst (Robert Redford) scrambling to uncover a conspiracy orchestrated at the highest levels of government. Closing out the series with a classic criminal caper, *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968) presents Dunaway as a tenacious insurance investigator determined to crack the case of a bank heist engineered by a jade millionaire (Steve McQueen). 7 and 9:15 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 3 and 5:15 p.m. Sundays. Showtimes do vary slightly each week; visit trylon.org for a complete schedule. \$8. 3258 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-424-5468.

Through January 26 —BRAD RICHASON

THEATER

SCREAM IT OFFSCREEN

PARKWAY THEATER

In these dark times, it's important to remember that democracy can be a beautiful thing. But it can also be chaotic. See exactly what we mean at *Scream It Off Screen*, a monthly short film series where audiences yea or nay each piece via scream or silence. At each installment, local filmmakers submit a 15-minute short. After three minutes, the audience collectively votes on whether or not to watch it to the end... or banish it forever. If you're a "nay," you'll start screaming. If your vote is "yea," then you must remain silent. Films that get majority screams will be gonged, but not forgotten. In the end, the top filmmaker walks away with a giant check for \$101. Expect to see some compellingly weird stuff, some

true clunkers, cringe-worthy efforts, and potential masterpieces. You decide what you scream at. Films are traditionally collected on a first-come, first served basis, but this week they're doing things a little differently, as event hosts will be trying out the lottery route. Show up at Turtle Bread with your thumb drive at 7 p.m. on Thursday to enter. 18+. 7 p.m. \$8/\$10. 4814 Chicago Ave., Minneapolis; 612-822-8080. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SPORTS

WRESTLEPALOOZA XVI AND XVII

FIRST AVENUE

There's professional wrestling, and then there's Wrestlepalooza. The biannual extravaganza has become a must-see rite of passage for anyone who claims to be a true Minnesotan, combining wrestling, burlesque, and live music in a cabaret of madness unlike anything else. FIRST Wrestling, the group behind Wrestlepalooza, is once again taking over First Avenue for two nights to kick off the New Year, and they're coming out swinging. Some of the biggest names in independent wrestling will be descending on Minneapolis for the weekend, including "Famous Penis Wrestler" Joey Ryan, Orange Cassidy, and Jake Atlas. Local favorites will be here, too, including "The Anarchist" Arik Cannon and Devon Monroe. Minneapolis pop-punk trio Tightwire will be on hand to provide the soundtrack for the evening, while some of the Twin Cities' burlesque all-stars will bring their own heavy artillery. The Saturday night event is already sold out, and Friday's will definitely sell out soon. Whether your entire closet is full of old '90s wrestling T-shirts and it's still real to you, dammit,

or you're just curious what a "Famous Penis Wrestler" does, you have to experience Wrestlepalooza for yourself. 18+. 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$27/\$35. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. **Also Saturday —PATRICK STRAIT**

SATURDAY 1.4

ART/MUSEUM

VISION 2020: CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Bold, striking, powerful, and beautiful are all ways to describe the work of the featured artists of "Vision 2020," a new exhibit at Mia showcasing three photographers who hail from Africa. Zanele Muholi, of Umlazi, South Africa, gives dignity to those who are stigmatized, snapping black-and-white portraits of people of color in the LGBTQ community, a group that continues to face oppression and inequality in the post-Apartheid era. Sengalese fashion photographer Omar Victor Diop's work is vibrant, gorgeous, and colorful, touching on history, iconic figures, and potential futures. Samuel Fosso, from Cameroon, has created a world of personalities over the decades, taking self-portraits of himself, always as someone else, as a commentary on political events, Pan-African pop-culture, and civil rights movements worldwide. Free. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-870-3131. **Through June 14 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

ART/GALLERY

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For the past three years, Summer Cypher Minneapolis has brought B-boy and B-girl dancers, MCs, DJs, graffiti artists, spoken-word artists, drummers, and more together in an inclusive, intergenerational environment meant to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, space, and opportunities in the hip-hop community. Modus Locus' latest exhibition, "Winter Cypher," celebrates all that has come from the Cypher programming. That includes videos by Teddy Grimes, plus photographs by Kimani Beard and gallery owner Ephraim Eusebio. The three curated the exhibit together, which also features many of the artists who have participated in the series over the years. In addition to the opening reception this Saturday, January 4, from 2 to 8 p.m., the month-long exhibition will host numerous gatherings, ending with a B-boy/B-girl battle on February 1. 3500 Bloomington Ave., Minneapolis; 612-382-9477. **Through February 1 —SHEILA REGAN**



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20 FOR '20

Movies to look forward to in the new year



MELINDA SUE GORDON

BY TONY LIBERA

Will the '20s be the last decade in human history? We'll see! In the meantime, let's distract ourselves from our probable doom by spending more time than ever watching movies. Here's what will be worth seeing in 2020.

No Time to Die (April 8)

When Daniel Craig took over the 007 mantle in *Casino Royale*, he ushered in a new era for James Bond. Here's hoping he can go out with a bang after the disaster that was *Spectre*. Cary Joji Fukunaga will direct, and his work on the first season of *True Detective* warrants some hype here.

Black Widow (May 1)

Well, it only took 12 years, 20-some movies, and her character's epic death, but Scarlett Johansson finally gets her own Marvel flick. *Black Widow* will have to be a prequel given her *Endgame* kersplat, which makes for a weird order of events. Fingers crossed there's a bigger-picture tie-in, or else a dead character on a solo escapade could mean diminished stakes.

Knowing the Marvel Cinematic Universe, let's give 'em the benefit of the doubt.

Fast & Furious 9 (May 22)

The action-adventure pivot in *Fast Five* has made the *The Fast and the Furious* series one of the dumb-funniest franchises around. What's *Fast & Furious 9* about? Who cares? Vin Diesel will drive cool cars, drink some Coronas, and say something like, "When you're here, you're family." Rinse. Repeat.

Wonder Woman 1984 (June 5)

DC has burned us plenty over the past few years, yet *Wonder Woman* was one of their few movies to pull its weight. The sequel's marketing materials have revealed Chris Pine's return from the dead, a move that rarely plays out well. Still, I'm staying optimistic that Gal Gadot and co. can keep *Wonder Woman* wonderful.

Soul (June 19)

Pixar's second film of the year pairs Jamie Foxx and Tina Fey as a couple of disembodied—you guessed it—souls. Bloomington native Pete Doctor is running the show, and considering his last three directorial efforts gave us *Monsters,*



WARNER BROS

Inc., Up, and Inside Out, Soul has the potential to be one of Pixar's finest.

Ghostbusters: Afterlife (July 10)

Jason Reitman picks up the franchise where his dad Ivan left off, ignoring 2016's forgettable reboot and dipping back into the original universe. Reitman the younger leans more toward drama, and the trailer suggests a less comedic tone, so it'll be interesting to see how Reitman reconciles *Afterlife* with the originals. And hey, Paul Rudd.

Tenet (July 17)

Tenet is Christopher Nolan's next film, so the less you know the better. I'd wager it's well worth going in blind.

Last Night in Soho (September 25)

Few directors make movies as fun as Edgar Wright's, but *Last Night in Soho* will take a spooky turn. We know there's psychological horror and some time hi-jinks. Beyond that, we'll just have to trust in Wright's distinctive skills.

Eternals (November 6)

I wasn't convinced *Guardians of the Galaxy* would work on the big screen, and

it turned out to be one of my favorites in the MCU. I'm thinking *Eternals* might go the same way, with Chloé Zhao—who directed one of my favorite movies of the past decade, *The Rider*—at the helm.

Dune (December 18)

Dune is always going to be a tricky adaptation because of its expansiveness. Frank Herbert's sci-fi epic is both physically huge and full of complex political machinations. Yet if Denis Villeneuve can do for *Dune* what he did for *Blade Runner 2049*, we might have one of the decade's best right out the gate.

Honorable Mentions:

Birds of Prey (February 7)

Onward (March 6)

A Quiet Place: Part II (March 20)

Mulan (March 27)

The Lovebirds (April 3)

The Personal History of

David Copperfield (May 8)

Candyman (June 12)

Bill & Ted Face the Music (August 21)

The King's Man (September 18)

Raya and the Last Dragon

(November 25) 

CAT-NIP

Local actors reflect on WTF went wrong with *Cats*



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

BY JAY GABLER

“I don’t want people to think that this is what musical theater is,” says actor Natalie Shaw about the new movie *Cats*, “but I hope this inspires more people to see musical theater just to be like, ‘Okay, is it always like this? Are shows always this weird?’”

In cinemas, *Cats* is looking like an epic flop despite being one of the most talked-about holiday releases. Critics have taken their claws out for Tom Hooper’s star-studded adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s 1981 stage musical, and Twin Cities theater artists understand why.

“The dancing was at best *Step Up: Take It to the Litter Box*,” says actor Patrick Kozicky. “The acting was sloppy, and the CGI was alarmingly difficult to look at. While the stage version is innocent and playful, the movie is unnecessarily sexed-up and borderline offensive.”

“Why are cats wearing shoes?” asks Shaw, beginning a long list of oddities and disappointments. “Many of these performers didn’t sound warmed-up, were not hitting the right notes—sorry, Rebel Wilson and Francesca Hayward.

Jason Derulo has a cockney accent that’s unneeded. And there’s this underlying tone of horniness that’s very strange! All these cats have bedroom eyes for each other.”

How does that even work, given that they’re cat-human hybrids with infamously airbrushed genitals? “I don’t know how they have cat sex,” admits

“The dancing was at best *Step Up: Take It to the Litter Box*.”

Shaw. “I really don’t know.”

While Hooper has blamed a rushed timeline for the subpar CGI (a supposedly improved version was dispatched to theaters days after the film’s release), Walking Shadow Theatre Company co-founder John Heimbuch, who says watching *Cats* onstage “was a formative experience for me as a theater artist,” sees larger problems.

“The play doesn’t really have a plot,” he says. “The movie felt the need to insert

all these typical Hollywood things that defied the very nature of what the play was and robbed it of a huge part of what made it special.”

Onscreen, says Heimbuch, the “joy of the play” is lost amid elaborate, uncanny visual effects. “There’s something about being there that this show requires... it just is a bunch of people onstage pretending to be cats and other things, like pretending to be mice or pretending to be cockroaches or pretending to make a train.”

So *Cats* the movie is bad... is it so bad it’s good? “It’s a new era of *Rocky Horror* or *The Room*,” says Shaw. “I think it’s going to have a cult following. I’m so excited to take more of my friends. It already felt like I was at a midnight screening.”

“This movie feels like a situation where a group of otherwise very talented individuals were certain that they could do no wrong,” says Kozicky, adding a plea on behalf of a star whose furry makeup becomes amply moistened with tears and a runny nose, all shot in prolonged close-up. “Can someone please give Jennifer Hudson a tissue?” **CP**

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COURTESY OF GIGI BERRY

FORWARD MERCH

Pins, zines, and of course T-shirts—how bands brand themselves with style

BY SOPHIE VILENSKY

The first concert T-shirt was apparently created in the 1950s by an Elvis fan club. In the '60s, the artist Warren Dayton pioneered the usage of T-shirts as an artistic medium.

Cool, fine, whatever. But what's that got to do with Minnesota? Here's an anecdote for locals. In the '90s, Joel Jacobson showed up at the State Fair with a "Brian Oake for President" T-shirt, stumping whimsically for the then-Rev 105 radio personality.

"I worked at a place where you could screen-print," Jacobson recalls. He and his brother printed up a few of the shirts, then visited Oake at a State Fair booth. "I can't remember exactly what he said, but something along the lines of 'Thanks, but I'm not sure I'd be the right fit.'"

The T-shirt stood out because the Minneapolis music scene in the '90s was not exactly merch-forward, according to Jacobson. "A lot of it was flyers and posters. That's how bands got the word out."

There were still physical objects to covet and collect: vinyl and CDs and cassettes, of

course, and people, Jacobson included, would save ticket stubs. But merch was hardly at the center of the club-going experience.

People still save stubs. And posters and flyers are still necessary, though you're more likely to see them on a screen than stapled to a telephone pole. But the lines at merch tables have grown, with new designs—and new items—showing up all the time.

The big shift in the merch game has a lot to do with artist's paychecks. This is hardly breaking news: Physical music sales are down, streaming is in, and if we want to support the people we love we've got to buy their shit. Today you can find windbreakers and hats and socks and keychains and candles at the merch table, as well as anything else you can emblazon with a logo.

Locally, Gigi Berry rules her enamel pin empire. She's made pins for Last Import, Lady Midnight, and New Black City; no doubt new collaborations will be on their way soon. Berry finds a lot of her favorite pieces to be fan-made, with love for the artist at the forefront.

"When I go to shows I buy merch religiously—I like leaving the show with something that says I was there," Berry says. "Encouraging local bands to invest in merch is important because your fans want it and they're basically walking adverts. Someone is gonna ask, 'Hey, where'd you get that hat/shirt/patch/sticker/pin from?' and they're gonna want to tell them all about your band."

Designers like Alexis Politz—whose work can be seen on Berry's Last Import pin—create these stickers and clothing and posters that show up both physically and on Instagram feeds.

Politz mentions the physical edition of P.O.S.'s *Never Better* as an early design inspiration. She remembers being 14 and ogling the vinyl coverings and tracing paper. "It's vital to have merch that people can hold and touch and look at while they're experiencing a show," Politz says. "It's important to have good merch because it'll represent a band in some way. With DIY bands especially—you have to have good visuals to get people's attention. It's art helping art helping art."

To mark the release of their album *Semi-Permanent*, Kitten Forever released a zine featuring lyrics and interviews plus a digital download code.

"We liked the idea of a physical object you would sit with and experience in your hands," says Kitten Forever's Liz Elton. "They're a little annoying to tour with since they take up a lot of room and are relatively delicate—they crinkle easily—but it's totally worth it and they're a fun merch table conversation-starter."

Doomtree has onesies featuring their "No Kings" logo. Niiice has rolling papers. Bob Ross Mob Boss had a hot sauce. The merch possibilities seem endless, even if the supply isn't. Legacy items like the Rhymesayers windbreaker are still hard to snag; the Bad Bad Hats hats that say "Bad Bad" were sold out until recently.

"Merch is about being able to show off your taste. Being able to support your friends," Natalie Klemmond of Gully Boys says. "Coming out for a band is one thing. But to be able to take something away—there's something sweet about it."

Through all this innovation and expansion, though, one item still reigns supreme.

"Bands are a really elaborate T-shirt commercial," says Klemmond, quoting the podcast *Creative Pep Talk*. She designs all the band's merch including a particular T-shirt that's been on my mind: Three weapon-yielding cherubs fly around, rosy and perfect and...

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MUSIC

dangerous, and the band's name is rendered in a gothic font. The band also made two new T-shirts available on the first night of their December residency at the Entry.

"It's always gonna be T-shirts," agrees career merchandise manager Doug Lefebvre.

T-shirts aren't cheap—Lefebvre says \$35 is a fair price to pay for a shirt when you take into account all that goes into it: the collaboration of artist and designer, the sellers, the printers, the stock. And how sustainable is a business built on \$35 T-shirts? According to Lefebvre, very. He would know: He has the data and industry expertise to back the claim up. He's been on every Atmosphere tour and he's watched over semi-trucks full of cotton blanks. He can count a stack of shirts in mere seconds and knows exactly what your eye spots first in a display.

And his favorite design? That'd be like asking someone to pick their favorite child, but Lefebvre mentioned Poliça's collection and the package for Brother Ali's *All the Beauty in This Whole Life* album as examples of excellent local merch items, as well as Atmosphere's ship-in-bottle-surrounded-by-filigree T-shirt.

"It's about coveting the new stuff and digging up the old," Lefebvre says. "Merch is alive and well. It will be for a very, very long time." ☐

CRITICS' PICKS

LONGFALL

7TH ST. ENTRY, THURSDAY 1.2

Longfall inhabits the small, skewed corner where arena expressionism intersects with ambient throb. The local band makes fragile, grandiose soundscape rock, with a sweeping, epic feel enabled and undercut by how often they interrupt or redirect their seeping electronic groove. Their show celebrates the release of their new album, *What We Found*. With Coyote Kid and Inland Coastal. 18+. 7 p.m. \$10. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —LUCAS FAGEN

ICEBLINK, IE, SISTER SPECIES

7TH ST. ENTRY, 1.5

Local electronic performers Iceblink and IE share an approach to constructing soundscapes: Theirs are subliminally creepy, hypnotic but not relaxing, indebted to experimental film scores, with smooth textures, occasional hushed voices, and an ominous emotional undertow. Sister Species' polished chamber-pop, dotted with trumpets and accordion, is rather more upbeat. 18+. 7:30 p.m. \$7. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —LUCAS FAGEN

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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): "We are all hostages of the joy of which we deprive ourselves," wrote poet Odysseus Elytis. Isn't that an astounding idea? That we refuse to allow ourselves to experience some of the bliss and pleasure we could easily have; and that we are immured inside that suppressed bliss and pleasure? I call on you, Aries, to rebel against this human tendency. As I see it, one of your main tasks in 2020 is to permit yourself to welcome more bliss, to aggressively seize more pleasure, and thereby free yourself from the rot of its nullification.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): At age 22, Taurus-born Dutch citizen Willem de Kooning sneaked into the United States. He was a stowaway on an Argentina-bound freighter, and stealthily disembarked when the ship made a stop in Virginia. As he lived in America during subsequent decades, he became a renowned painter who helped pioneer the movement known as abstract expressionism. His status as an illegal immigrant rarely presented any obstacles to his growing success and stature. Not until age 57 did he finally become an American citizen. I propose we make him one of your role models in 2020. May he inspire you to capitalize on being a maverick, outsider, or stranger. May he encourage you to find opportunities beyond your safety zone.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): When British novelist E. M. Forster was in his late 30s, he had sex with another person for the first time. Before that he had published five novels. After that, he produced just one more novel, though he lived till age 91. Why? Was he having too much fun? Looking back from his old age, he remarked that he would "have been a more famous writer if I had published more, but sex prevented the latter." I suspect that sensual pleasure and intimacy will have the exact opposite effect on you in 2020, Gemini. In sometimes mysterious ways, they will make you more productive in your chosen sphere.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): "Every part of our personality that we do not love will regress and become hostile to us," wrote poet Robert Bly. I don't know anyone who doesn't suffer from this problem at least a little. That's the bad news. The good news for us Cancerians (yes, I'm a Crab!) is that 2020 will be a favorable time to engage in a holy crusade to fix this glitch: to feel and express more love for parts of our personality that we have dismissed or marginalized. The result? Any self-sabotage we have suffered from in the past could dramatically diminish.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): As a young adult, Leo-born Raymond Chandler worked as a fruit-picker, tennis racket-stringer, and bookkeeper. At age 34, he began a clerical job at the Dabney Oil Syndicate, and eventually rose in the ranks to become a well-paid executive. The cushy role lasted until he was 44, when he was fired. He mourned for a while, then decided to become an author of detective fiction. It took a while, but at age 50, he published his first novel. During the next 20 years, he wrote six additional novels as well as numerous short stories and screenplays--and in the process became popular and influential. I present this synopsis as an inspirational story to fuel your destiny in 2020.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): The fame of Virgo-born Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) has persisted through the ages because of *Orlando Furioso*, an epic poem he authored. It tells the story of the Christian knight Orlando and his adoration for a pagan princess. This great work did not come easily to Ariosto. It wasn't until he had written 56 versions of it that he was finally satisfied. I suspect you may harbor an equally perfectionist streak about the good works and labors of love you'll craft in 2020. May I suggest you confine your experiments to no more than 10 versions?

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Leonardo da Vinci worked on his painting *The Last Supper* from 1495 to 1498. It's a big piece--about 15 by 29 feet. That's one reason why he took so long to finish. But there was another explanation, too. He told his patron, the Duke of Milan, that he sometimes positioned himself in front of his painting-in-progress and simply gazed at and thought about it, not lifting a brush. Those were times he did some of his hardest work, he said. I trust you will have regular experiences like that in 2020, Libra. Some of your best efforts will arise out of your willingness and ability to incubate your good ideas with concentrated silence and patience.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): By 1895, Henry James had already published 94 books. He was renowned in the U.S. and England, and had written the works that would later lead to him being considered for a Nobel Prize. Then, at age 52, although he was not physically fit, he decided to learn how to ride a bicycle. He paid for lessons at a bicycle academy, and cheerfully tolerated bruises and cuts from his frequent falls as an acceptable price to pay for his new ability. I admire James' determination to keep transforming. Let's make him a role model for you in 2020. May he inspire you to keep adding new aptitudes as you outgrow your previous successes.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): When Sagittarian composer Ludwig van Beethoven created the *Eroica* symphony in the early 1800s, many observers panned it. They said its rhythms were eccentric, that it was too long. One critic said it was "glaring and bizarre," while another condemned its "undesirable originality." This same critic concluded, "Genius proclaims itself not in the unusual and fantastic but in the beautiful and sublime." Today, of course, *Eroica* has a different reputation. It's regarded as a breakthrough event in musical history. I'll go on record here, Sagittarius, to say that I suspect you created your own personal version of *Eroica* in 2019. 2020 is the year it will get the full appreciation it deserves, although it may take a while. Be patient.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): I'm going to speculate that sometime in the next six months, you will experience events that years from now you'll look back on as having been the beginning of a fresh universe for you. What should you call this launch? I suggest you consider elegant terms like "Destiny Rebirth" or "Fate Renewal" rather than a cliché like the "Big Bang." And how should you celebrate it? As if it were the Grand Opening of the rest of your long life.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): In 2020, I believe you will be able to summon the insight and kismet necessary to resolve at least one long-running problem, and probably more. You'll have an enhanced ability to kick bad habits and escape dead ends and uncover liberating truths about mysteries that have flustered you. Frustrations and irritations you've grudgingly tolerated for far too much time will finally begin to wane. Congratulations in advance, Aquarius! The hard work you do to score these triumphs won't always be delightful, but it could provide you with a curiously robust and muscular kind of fun.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Let's say you wanted to dress completely in silk: shirt, pants, vest, scarf, socks, shoes, hat, underwear, all made of silk. And let's say your dream was to grow and process and weave the silk from scratch. You'd start with half an ounce of silkworm eggs. They'd hatch into 10,000 silkworms. Eventually those hard-working insects would generate five pounds of silk--enough to create your entire outfit. So in other words, you'd be able to generate an array of functional beauty from a small but concentrated amount of raw material. By the way, that last sentence is a good description of what I think your general approach should be in 2020. And also by the way, dressing in silk wouldn't be too crazy an idea in the coming months. I hope you'll have fun cultivating your allure, style, and flair.

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20/20 VISION

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

1 Day-in, day-out routine

6 Armitron rival

11 Grocery store chain whose employees wear Hawaiian shirts, for short

14 Region of Ephesus

15 Ready for swashbuckling, say

16 Waver, as on a point

17 Person who photographs Möttley Crüe bassist Nikki?

19 Butler's address part?

20 Saints might be known for them: Abbr.

21 Cold War capital

22 Play with dead people

24 Drink with a lizard on its bottles

25 2018 World Series winners, briefly

26 Abode that provides cold comfort?

28 Simply the best

31 Use God Mode, say

32 Squat muscles

33 Bother

34 Perfumer François

35 Is in pain

36 All dressed up

37 Clean Air Act agcy.

38 Jockey straps

39 TikTok users, likely

40 Fails to pay back, as a loan

42 Oktoberfest meat

43 Type for a belly button ring

44 Talkative bird

45 Certain proof of purchase

47 Actress Chaplin

48 "Try the veal!"

51 Fish on a schmeer

52 Comedian Jamie wearing only knee-highs?

55 ____ dye

56 Side best enjoyed with Hawaiian shirts, I'd say

57 Totally out of it

58 Mother clucker

59 Stretch while working

60 Good times

Down

1 General idea

2 PED abuser's injection, for short

3 '80s new wave band whose name sounds like a surplus

4 Cancel out

5 1981 movie set on a submarine

6 Collision where one car smashes into the other's side door

7 ____ maiden

8 Yoga equipment

9 50-50 wager

10 Abnormal dryness, in dermatology

11 MP3s of "Intro" and "Angels"?

12 "The Rise of Skywalker" extra

13 Dirty books

18 Skid row resident

23 "Send us a résumé, everybody!," for short

24 Do a mic drop-worthy performance, e.g.

25 Some bath toys

26 "Lord willing!"

27 Intentionally walk runner James during

the softball game?

28 Some GPS alerts

29 Praying figure

30 Sommelier's suggestions

31 Included in an email blast

32 Very very

35 Feature of some hospital roofs

36 Indie actor Michael

38 Tense second elections

39 Hero from the ocean

41 Certain soldier

42 Casino magnate Steve

44 Like delectable cake

45 Like undetectable cake

46 Seep out, like gooey fillings

47 Sometimes they can't take a yoke

48 Amazon home assistant

49 Equal (to)

50 Amts. in a cookbook

53 The first and only Super Bowl wherein two players were named MVP

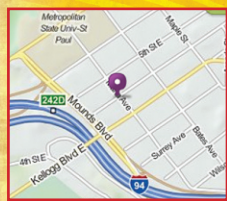
54 Her website is imaginepeace.com

Last Week's Answer

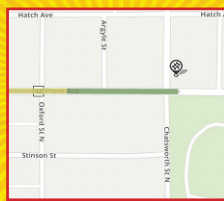
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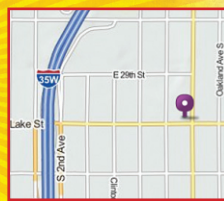
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Bottoming Out

Help me help my best friend!

My best friend (gay male) and I (straight male) are students in our penultimate year of university. While I and my other friends all do reasonably well romantically, my gay friend hasn't had anything significant happen in the three years I've known him. He's never had a relationship. It's always been a bit of a soft spot for him, but recently, after going through an unreciprocated crush on a straight friend, he's been very down about it. His constant complaint is that all the men he likes always wind up being straight male metrosexual types who don't seem to realize they're leading him on or are outright homophobic/super-hetero dickheads. He's gotten on Grindr, but still no luck. Conversations about romance or sex almost inevitably end up with him lamenting his fate. While I'm always there to listen and talk, I'm not sure what I can say or do, other than the generic "It'll happen one day" platitudes. He's definitely attractive and charming and relatively confident, so it really does seem like the issue might just be one of scarcity. Just wondering if you have any advice.

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If your roommate is the only gay guy on your campus and Grindr is actually an empty cupboard, if this is truly a scarcity issue, then your roommate has all my sympathy, BAREBEDS. But if he's one of those gay guys who finds gayness so repulsive in others that all openly gay men are automatically disqualified—if he's one of those gay guys who's only into straight-identified boys, straight metrosexuals, and his fellow homophobes—then your roommate has a lot less of my sympathy. If you've seen him pass on other attractive, charming, confident gay boys he could have so he could go moon over straight boys he can't have, BAREBEDS, then he doesn't need to hear, "It'll happen one day." He needs to hear, "It'll never happen until you get over your internalized homophobia, dude." Because even if one of his straight crushes turns out to be just heteroflexible enough to let your roommate suck his dick, that guy isn't going to be interested in more

than a few blowjobs and certainly won't be capable of loving him.

But, hey, if it really is about scarcity, and only graduating and moving away will change things, you can always tell him, "Sorry, it's obviously not going to happen for you here—but instead of lamenting your fate, let's talk about all the ass you're gonna get when you move to New York/London/Berlin."



Dan Savage

Gay male here. Every so often, I call an old-fashioned phone-sex party line to get off with strangers. Usually the talk is pretty standard stuff about what we would be doing to each other if we were together. Sometimes I like to pop into the older/younger room, and more than once I've found an older guy who likes connecting with

younger guys (me). That's fine, but as this guy phone-fucks me, he starts slipping into some disturbing comments. Specifically, he'll go from talking about how much he likes fucking me—a consenting, over-18 male—to talking about how much he's enjoying fucking underage girls in his own family. I have no control over who the system matches me with, and of course I can click out at will. I also have no way of knowing where this guy is calling from. But I've encountered him a few times. Do I have some kind of obligation here?

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Anonymous strangers on phone-sex party lines—who even knew those were still a thing?—are not mandatory reporters. Meaning, you aren't legally obligated to go to the police if you suspect someone might be abusing a child. But even if you did file a report, what would you say? Someone, somewhere is saying some seriously fucked-up shit on an anonymous phone-sex line? You would get shrugged out of the police station. My advice would be to tell the guy, if you ever get matched with him again, that his child-rape fantasies are a huge turnoff and you've thought about reporting him. Then hang up.

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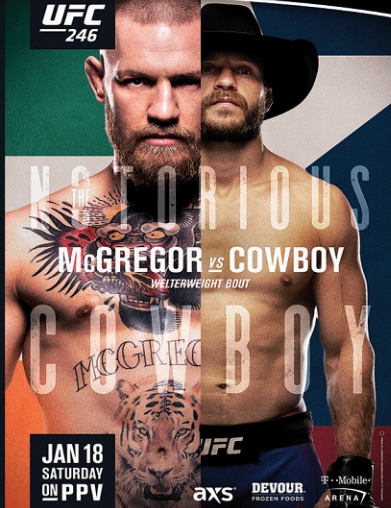
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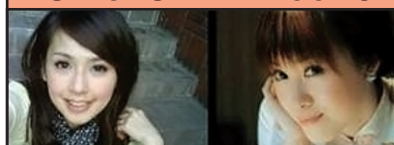
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